

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE Attachments

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March 21, 1963

Attached Analysis of Opinion re Cuba

This fresh analysis of public confidence in the Administration is stimulated by 2 forthcoming Gallup Polls and by recent public comment.

cc:-P - Mr. Lisle

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DIMINISHING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN ADMINISTRATION'S  
HANDLING OF CUBA PROBLEM

The Gallup Poll release for Friday, March 22, reports that "satisfaction with the way the Kennedy administration has been handling the Cuba situation in recent weeks" has diminished from 56% in February to 52% today. Dissatisfaction has increased from 28% to 33%.

Dissatisfaction is greatest among Republicans (now 52%). It is increasing more among Independents (from 29% to 39%) than among Democrats (from 16% to 19%).

Dissatisfaction is greater in the South and the Far West (37%) than in the East (32%) and in the Midwest (28%).

Public comment makes clear that it is the presence of Russian forces in Cuba which is exciting more concern than the menace of Castro.

Trend To Continue? The present tendency toward diminishing confidence in the Administration is likely to continue unless--

- A. Obviously strong U.S. action is undertaken (diplomatic, economic, or military); or
- B. Americans conclude that no strong action is feasible; or
- C. Public attention is diverted to other subjects. (Even this would probably be only for a temporary period.)

Public Wants Action Both opinion polls and public comment attest the public desire for stronger action.

In public comment there is currently a 2-to-1 margin held by those demanding action--usually a blockade or embargo. For example--

Dissatisfied with U.S.

Satisfied

Minneapolis Star	Oakland Tribune	New York Times
Phila. Bulletin	Miami Herald	New York Post
Phila. Inquirer	Wash. Star	St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Salt Lake Tribune	Chicago Tribune	San Francisco Chronicle
Atlanta Constitution	Roscoe Drummond	Charlotte Observer
David Lawrence	Wm. B. Hearst, Jr.	James Reston

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The Minnesota Poll found 73% of its representative sample of adult Minnesotans in favor of a U.S. demand for removal of Russian "troops and weapons" from Cuba.

Less Fear Of Russia      Reporting interviews in many states, Samuel Lubell cites a "dramatic drop in the fear of Soviet retaliation."

The Gallup Poll release for Sunday, March 24, reports that a plurality of Americans now see Red China as a greater threat to peace than Russia. The question asked: "Looking ahead to 1970, which country do you think will be the greater threat to world peace?" Red China, said 47%; Russia, according to 34%. In 1961 these figures were substantially the other way around.

Administration Too Timid?      Several commentators complain (e.g. Holmes Alexander) that the Administration is too concerned about injury to Russia. A number charge the Administration with having made a "deal" with the Soviet Union.

Even the "internationalist" Minneapolis Star calls it "self-defeating" for the U.S. to refrain from a blockade because of a possible "military response" from Russia.

Roscoe Drummond and David Lawrence hold the Administration errs in calling the blockade a war device.

### Implications for Information

- 1- Public confidence in the Administration will be aided less by repetition of its firm position on Russian withdrawal than by public acts demonstrating that the U.S. is actually doing something to get the Russians out (e.g. a U.S. appeal for joint action by other members of the OAS, laying the case before the UN as a threat to peace, public U.S. appeals for allies--and other free world nations--to join in an embargo).
- 2- The Government should encourage further realistic public discussion of the alternatives actually available to press the Russians out of Cuba.
- 3- It would be helpful to have leaders--especially Republicans--publicly back the Administration's course. (Perhaps--to avoid the negative posture of opposing action in the form of a blockade, etc.--they could stress that the Alliance for Progress is the best means of dealing with the Cuba problem.) Such supporters

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might well include churchmen, educators, businessmen, labor leaders (with a special effort to include leaders from the South and the Far West).

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